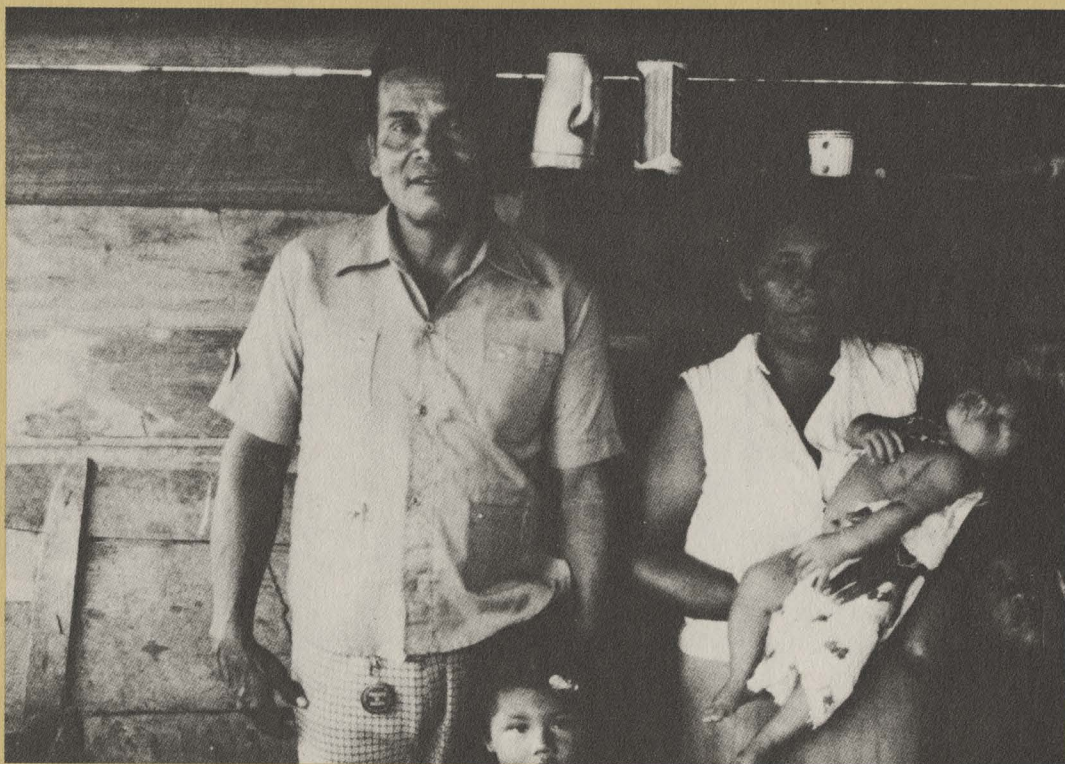


ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4236



The Palicour Indians of the Arucua River in Brazil

PRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

Side 1:

1. "Yagni bata keh"
2. "lata ino tah"
3. "Nab ba tek" (Frere Jacque)
4. "Je Sus"
5. "Bai cam be Aquis"
6. "Tain gah" - elder Palicour, medicine man
7. "Yo mah wa yo tainay" (wave on the Atlantic ocean) sung by Antonio Querta and Emilio Martes
8. "Yay pah-ka toh nay, Sa-oul" - the otter catches fish for food with his son sung by Antonio Querta and Emilio Martes
9. "Nam penya Gnay" building animal pens Antonia Querta and Emilio Martes

Side 2: Palicour-Galibi village on the Arucua River

1. "Maria ka toh" - young Galibi girl
2. "Mainga Mainga"
3. "Nango Nango"
4. "Kanga manta"
5. "Kainding Gah oo"
6. "Kasa Manga"
7. "Kaya Toh Num"
8. Walk at night in Palicour village of Tipoche

Recorded in February 1980 by David Blair Stiffler using a Nagra SN

Photos by David Blair Stiffler

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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The Palicours of the Arawak family now living along the Oyapok river in two locations, one in French Guiana and the other in Brazil have become acculturated and integrated into the Creole-society. They still maintain and practice distinct cultural traits that make them unique from other indigenous peoples in South America.

Separated into two basic groups, the largest and most culturally intact live on the Arucaua River in the Brazilian state of Amapa, while the smaller more integrated group lives in and around the village of St. Georges, French Guiana.

The Palicour, who still preserve their own customs and language, speak Portugese and Creole as well. They live in the swampy estuary, secluded deep into the marshlands of the Uaca river and its tributaries, in rectangular houses built on piles or stilts (previously beehive shaped closed at night to keep out the mosquitos).

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Living off of the plentiful game that proliferates along the waterways and marshes, the Palicour were once driven out by the Portugese, who depopulated the entire coast between the Oyapok and the Amazon in 1784-88, but later escaped and returned in their canoes to settle on the Uaca river and its tributaries where they remain today. (The Brazilian Government and FUNAI an organization to protect the indians have established this area as an Indian Reservation) and provide an official and medical orderly.

Subsisting mainly from hunting and fishing which they do from their fine wooden dugouts, (noted for their excellence) the Palicour have a wide range of diet from waterfowl, (cormorants, aningas and Macaws), and tortoises to caiman (related to the alligator) that they hunt at night with flashlights (or torches) and shotguns. They still hunt fish with the bow and arrow.

Supplementing the game that they catch, manioc or quoc as it is called, is their main food staple, as it is throughout the Guianas. (Guiana or the territory known as Guiana, previously included all of the area south of the Orinoco river in Venezuela to all of the area north of the Amazon in Brazil, i.e., Venezuelan, Brazilian, British, French and Dutch Guianas).

The tide or the waves of the Atlantic play an important role in the lives of the Palicour and other indians living in the swamps and estuary of the Oyapok in several ways.

The flow of the river is governed by the action of the tidal table. The tidal floods that inundate the marshes rise as much as 20 feet. This dictates the transportation and activity of the indians who are dependent on their canoes. Traveling from one location to the other in this area is predicated on the flow of the river. (It is not uncommon to see an egret riding on a floating log.)

In the lore of the Palicour, the tide or current plays an additional spiritual relationship to the indians.

The Palicour, as do many indian or indigenous people throughout the world practice totemism or the consideration that they are directly related to certain natural phenomenon (such as a wave) or animals as the cayman or river otter. (Two songs in this album have this specific theme. "Yo mah wa yo tainay," and "yay pah-ka toh nay" the wave and the otter respectively.)

Aside from totemism their social structure and activity is governed in the village unit by an elected headman whose duties are to mediate disputes, welcome strangers, organize communal enterprises and smooth over internal difficulties. In the past, but with less prominence today, is the shaman or medicine man. The shaman primarily a doctor and contact of the spirit world, at times supercedes the headman. The shaman's responsibilities being many: acts as a master of ceremonies, counselor in warfare, finder of

lost goods, name giver, depository of tradition and weather maker. The chief insignia of a shaman is his gourd rattle, animal shaped painted bench and doll.

In the act of healing, the shaman works with his basket of shamanistic paraphernalia, under the cover of a mosquito net in darkness (previously a palm-leaf enclosure) sitting on his animal shaped bench with a cigar and fragrant herbs and summons friendly spirits who aid in diagnosing and treatment of the illness. Usually the patient enters in with the shaman who conducts the music and chanting as the spectators join in. (The shaman blows smoke over the body and douses it with aromatic infusions.)

Upon a successful cure, the patient expresses his appreciation with a dance and drinking festival in which the successful doctor presides over by consecrating feathers, dance rattles carved stools by blowing smoke over these objects to entice the spirits to enter in after which participants invite them to drinking bouts with Cashiri or manioc beer. Other manifestations of Palicour culture appear very prominently by the cosmetic practice of piercing their cheeks and inserting feathers (no longer practiced) and filing their teeth into points along with the ubiquitous display of beadwork, from simple strands to intricate 3 dimensional constructions, usually elaborated with shaped and cut feathers, bits of wood, seeds and caiman teeth. (The beadwork and feathers are used to protect against demons and unfriendly spirits. Infants usually have many sets of beads on their arms and legs since they are most susceptible.)

Sometimes during pregnancy or following birth, the father must undergo certain "couvade" (ritualistic imitations of pregnancy and delivery) restrictions as an expression of the close bond between the father and the infant's clinging soul. For instance he must refrain from any heavy work for a week, or avoid thorny places so that the child's body would not be harmed. Also if the father went into the bush he would carry a miniature bow and arrow or hang a cord over his left shoulder for the child's soul.

The strength and unity of the Palicour peoples have influenced the culture of the neighboring indians such as the Galibi and Karipuna tribes whose remnants still live in the adjacent areas of the Uaca and Couripy river.

About the music:

Side 1 - The first 5 bands were sung by the small Palicour children of Tipoche Village revealing the current influence of the Brazilian government and the influence of the Catholic missionaries originally established at Ouanary, French Guiana over 100 years ago. The songs are sung in the Palicour dialect. Bands 6-9 are traditional folklore chants with ceremonial and totemic inspiration.

Side 2 - Prominent Palicour influence on the Galibi tribe (the woman who accompanies the man singing claimed to be a Galibi, however some controversy exists as to the exact origin of songs (whether Galibi or Palicour). These are ceremonial songs usually accompanied by a Sinal or Bamboo flute. This settlement comprises of a group of 5 houses including a hut that served as a classroom, situated on a grassy knoll surrounded by a luxuriant green growth of marsh and swamp-land.

Basically the theme of these songs is one of hunting and fishing.

**Other Records
Produced & Annotated
by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER**

FE 4235 MUSIC OF THE HAUT OYAPOK. Oyampi and Emerillon Indian Tribes, French Guiana, South America. RECORDED AND ANNOTATED BY DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER. Side A—EMERILLON INDIANS. All Emerillon songs sung by village headman, Captain Monpera. These songs are related to hunting and fishing. Acha Ae, Kono Wah Coupi Mae, Oh Deto Me, Mickero Pan To Children singing along, Oh Poooh Poh Ne, Myari Cha, Tapi Jah, Jema Maruha, Uh Mae Ae Children in background, Yah Hi Ah Chant, Bone Flute—Elder Oyampi playing at Camopi, Bone Flute—Young boy playing at Camopi. The music recorded of the Emerillon chief, Monpera at Camopi were chants believed to evoke luck and prosperity in the Hunt. "Captain Monpera" said that the Emerillon inhabited in the past areas further up the Camopi river in the interior, but fled to Camopi after the epidemic and thanks to the French his family now numbered about 60 persons. The songs were sung as he lay on his hammock at dusk, surrounded by his immediate family. Side B: OYAMPI INDIANS. Ola Missieu Recorded at Camopi, Creole Carnival son introduced by canoe pilots who make the St. Georges-Camopi-Trois Saut river run—Oyampi version of Carnaval. Vaval, Sung by Creole-Indian and Indian canoe pilots, serenading Oyampi village at Camopi. Eka Epu Pah, Sung by Oyampi boys. Initiation and festival music recorded at Trois Saut. Mya Ai, Recorded at Trois Saut. Enga Toiale, Recorded at Trois Saut. Epi Mo Po U Pi Ya Ya, Recorded at Trois Saut. Metal Flute, Melodic Tune La-Kel by Kwi-O-Li., recorded at Trois Saut. Metal Flute, Animal and bird influences. By Kwi-O-Li. The songs, Vaval and Ola Missieu, having a characteristically Carnival theme, one of revelry and celebration, were adopted from the Creoles.

